

## **Youth Investment Council Meeting**

### **Tuesday, February 25th, 2013 9:00am**

**Present:** Lauren Balkan, David Blevins, Todd Bonsall, Charoulla Castanos-Beaton, Sherri Goldberg, Stuart Grant, Ushindi Lewis, Mary Tarrant

**Staff:** Jane Brady, Jody Bramson, Shamar Spencer, Rick DeJesus, Hilda Alonso, Kenia Urias

The meeting started with the introduction of all present members and guests. All present members approved the previous meeting minutes.

#### **Alternative High School Diploma Celebration on January 14**

Jane Brady commenced the meeting by stating that the GED celebration was very successful and shared some pictures from the last GED graduation celebration. She informed the board that Earl Wiggley and a freeholder attended and supported the graduates.

Jody Bramson reported that 29 people earned the GED for this program year from Perth Amboy, Perth Amboy adult school, Carteret, and New Brunswick adult learning center. 12 participants attended the graduation with their friends and family.

#### **Alternative High School testing concerns**

Dave Blevins gave Mrs. Brady an article concerning the Alternative High School test to share with the YIC members. Mrs. Brady presented the current issue with the new Alternative High School test. She informed the YIC members that there are no testing centers giving the Alternative High School test because the state made mistakes in the M.O.U (Memorandum Of Understanding). The state indicated that the school systems should accept the document with the mistakes. The school systems however, did not agree to accept a document that is not accurate from the state. Mrs. Brady declares that the state now has to sign a correct M.O.U and get it to the school boards (Perth Amboy and New Brunswick) to pass it. It will not be until April if not later before testing day will be given.

#### **MCWAG Success Stories: Handout**

Hilda Alonso handed out 5 success stories of participants in the MCWAG program. A picture of one of the participants who was hired at the Metuchen YMCA was shown while he was in a class picture. Mrs. Alonso reported that there were a total of 13 participants in the program. The goal for the year is 25 participants. There were 8 new participants. The remaining 5 were carry-over. Out of the 13 participants 3 are active and 10 are terminated. There were 7 participants placed in jobs. 5 orientations were held. A presentation was held to promote the program at MCC. From this event 5 potential participants were referred. Mrs. Brady adds that the MCWAG has been highly successful.

Jane Brady explained the MCWAG program to the YIC members. Mrs. Brady realized the participants weren't getting employment because employers were looking to hire people with experience. That is when the MCWAG (Middlesex County Workforce Action Group) was developed so that when the participants were finished with the ITA'S, an interview was conducted and then the participants were placed in

a 2 week work readiness orientation with Hilda Alonso. Mrs. Alonso then seeks an employer to take them on the participants for 3 months. Mrs. Brady informs the YIC members that the MCWAG program can pay for licenses and driving lessons because it is included in the youth funds. She also announces that the program is having a hard time finding employers that match job training skills the participants have.

### **Youth Programs: Written Reports by staff**

#### **Middlesex County College Programs Enrollment Status**

Jody Bramson reported the following for this program year:

- MCC Work Readiness has 23 active participants and the goal for the year is 30. 13 were from the 1<sup>st</sup> cycle and 10 from the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle.
- MCC High School Diploma Prep Perth Amboy has 23 active participants and the goal for the year is 40. 20 were from the 1<sup>st</sup> cycle and 3 were from the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle.
- MCC High School Diploma Prep Carteret has 16 active participants and the goal for the year is 30. 14 were from the 1<sup>st</sup> cycle, and 2 from the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle.

Mrs. Brady clarified that the Youth Work Readiness is for those who have their high school diploma. The goal for the year is 30 youths; 15 participants in the first cycle and 15 participants in the second cycle.

#### **MC4YOU Perth Amboy-**

Mr. Spencer reported there were 38 participants served for this year. There were 31 participants in ITA. 13 participants completed an ITA.

Mr. Spencer has visited and presented the Youth One Stop program in many high schools such as Woodbridge Sayreville, Perth Amboy, Carteret, Colonia, Oldbridge, and South River.

#### **MC4YOU New Brunswick**

Mr. DeJesus announced a total of 13 participants served. 8 participants are finishing an ITA. 5 will be going to training.

#### **2014 Industry tour update**

Hilda Alonso reported that 2 industries tour were held in the fall. The first tour was to Wegfern and the other was to the Roosevelt Care Center. Both tours were very successful.

Mrs. Alonso is trying to coordinate a visit to Rutgers and Wegmans for later this year.

Mrs. Brady has been trying to contact Rutgers for the industry tours; however she hasn't received any response from them. If Rutgers fails to respond, the tour will resort to Middlesex County College which has already been contacted.

#### **Providing computer skills: Change in plans**

In the last meeting the members were informed that the orientations will be extending to 3 weeks and that Kenia Urias was going to be teaching the computer skills. Mrs. Brady stated that the orientation will continue being 3 weeks long. However, if there are participants who really need computer training, we can use the Learning Link instead of having a member of the youth staff teach the computer curriculum.

Mrs. Brady declares that we are trying to look for things already established versus setting up something new.

### **Recruiting plans**

Jane Brady announces that New Brunswick is still struggling when it comes to recruitment. She addressed that she met with juvenile police officers, juvenile probation officer, family court judges, and public defenders. She will meet with juvenile conference committee's northern and southern part of the county. The Youth One Stop coordinators will continue to visit different high school.

Jody Bramson stated that the youth staff reaches out to the drop-outs and Ms. Urias will be doing a mass mailing to all drop-outs.

### **Cost of some training concerns**

Jane Brady brought forth some issues concerning the high cost of the training program. She spoke about giving participants a more solid base; however the cost of training raises issues.

Mrs. Brady states that some of the training programs have high tuition which is leaving the youth participants with a high amount of loans to pay after they finish their training program. Jane Brady recognized that it was not appropriate to leave these clients with a high amount of debt to pay. There are 7 cases in particular that have been left with very large amount of debt. Mrs. Brady is trying to find substantial programs for these youth participants, but not as expensive being that we are paying the cost of this expensive training. Programs such as HVAC, diesel mechanics, and some computer courses have been problematic due to the high tuition. Mrs. Brady is open to suggestions. Jane Brady explained that it is preferred to send the participants to training to a program that is more than 2 or 3 months long because we want to give them a stronger base. However some of the programs are out of county and there are issues with transportation for the participants.

### **Raising stipend for MCWAG participants discussion**

Jane Brady recommended raising the stipend for the MCWAG program because some of the youth participants complained that the wages were too low being that they were receiving minimum wage. Mrs. Brady suggested that we raise the stipend because the participants of MCWAG had job certifications. Mrs. Brady requested for approval from the YIC members to raise the stipend from \$8.25 an hour to \$10 per hour; YIC members approved the motion to raise the stipend to \$10 an hour.

Jane Brady announced that an RFP (Request For Proposal) is going out for participants to receive \$6 an hour for orientation instead of the usual \$4.50. There will be no changes in stipend for participants in the ITA programs. They will continue receiving \$20 a day as before.

Jane asked for a motion to raise the classroom stipend from \$4.50 an hour to \$6 an hour. Stuart motioned to approve the orientation and MCWAG stipend. Laura seconded the motion. All YIC members approved the motion to raise the stipend from \$4.50 an hour to \$6 an hour.

Mrs. Brady announced that in about 2 weeks the RFP will be on the street for next year starting on July 1<sup>st</sup>. YIC members will decide who gets the money for next year for these programs.

Jane Brady adjourned the meeting.